

ORDER

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION**

BK
EA 1350.7A.

JUL 07 1992

Eastern Region
Jamaica, New York 11430

SUBJ: MAINTENANCE OF FACSIMILE FEDERAL RECORDS

1. PURPOSE. This order provides guidance on the handling of facsimile (fax) transmissions that are Federal records.
2. DISTRIBUTION. This order is distributed to the branch level and above in the Regional Headquarters and to all field offices and facilities.
3. CANCELLATION. Order EA 1350.7 is canceled.
4. BACKGROUND.

a. Facsimile transmissions have become a common means of office communication. Since an increasing number of documents are received by fax, records managers have requested guidance in the handling of such materials.

b. Most facsimile transmissions are made using "thermal paper." The images on thermal paper may begin to deteriorate in as few as six months. Such thermal papers are sensitive to heat and light, and will react with chemicals found in ordinary office environments (including markers, cosmetics, and some types of plastic folders), and may contain impermanent dyes. As a result, the text is likely to fade, becoming illegible, or the whole paper surface will darken, making the image indistinguishable. Thermal paper can be recognized by its smooth sheen and tendency to curl.

c. Some facsimile machines produce copies on plain paper by xerographic means, which produces a much more stable image than a copy made on thermal paper. Plain paper is easier than thermal paper to mark, copy, and file. Thermal paper is difficult to handle, particularly because of its tendency to curl.

d. Facsimile transmissions have the same potential to be Federal records as any other documentary materials received in Federal offices. They are Federal records when they are received in connection with agency business AND they are appropriate for preservation as evidence of agency organization and activities or because of the value of the information they contain.

5. ACTION.

a. All thermal paper facsimiles that are Federal records should be xerographically reproduced on plain paper at the time of receipt, except in the case of transitory documents that do not need to be filed.

1 Jul 07 1992

(1) This guidance does not apply to advance copies of materials on which no documented administrative action is taken. Such advance copies are non-record materials and may be destroyed immediately upon receipt of the original document.

(2) This guidance does apply to advance copies if the receiving office intends to circulate the advance copy for official purposes such as approval, comment, action, recommendation, or follow-up. In such instances, the advance copy is a Federal record and should be treated accordingly.

b. Plain paper copies of facsimiles that are Federal records should be filed in accordance with the agency's standard filing procedures.

c. Agencies that anticipate receiving large volumes of facsimile transmissions that are Federal records should consider purchasing a facsimile machine that produces plain paper copies by a xerographic process.

d. Facsimile message leaders, such as cover sheets, headers, and boxed notes, should advise the recipient to replace thermal paper facsimiles that are records with a plain paper copy. A recommended advisory is: "WARNING: Most fax machines produce copies on thermal paper. The image produced is highly unstable and will deteriorate significantly in a few years. It should be copied on a plain paper copier prior to filing as a record."

e. In the transmission of Privacy Act information via fax, or comparable electronic equipment, it will be the responsibility of the:

(1) Sending office to clearly mark the cover sheet indicating that the material being sent contains "Privacy Act Information."

(2) Receiving office to honor that notation by placing the material in a "For Official Use Only" envelope, FAA Form 1360-39, or an appropriate opaque envelope marked "Privacy Act Information, To Be Opened by Addressee Only," before delivery to the final receiving office.

6. QUESTIONS. Questions covering the policy or requests for further assistance may be directed to the Management Analysis Branch, AEA-42


Daniel J. Peterson
Regional Administrator